

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 20, 27, 30, 31, 38, 39, and 41-44 as shown below, in which deleted terms are shown with strikethrough and added terms are shown with underscoring. Also please cancel claim 26 without prejudice, and without dedication or abandonment of the subject matter thereof, and add new claims 45-46 as shown.

Claims 1-13 (Cancelled).

Claims 14-16 (Withdrawn).

Claims 17-18 (Cancelled).

Claim 19 (Withdrawn).

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Claim 20 (Currently Amended) A In a vehicle manufacturing method involving press-forming panel parts from a sheet metal and welding the panel parts together to form an automobile body ~~formation of a protective film on a paint finished automobile using strippable paint~~, the method comprising the steps of:

painting the automobile body so that [it] the automobile is paint-finished;

assembling an engine and functional parts into the paint-finished automobile body to thereby produce an assembled automobile; and

inspecting the assembled automobile,

wherein the method further includes, between the painting and the assembling steps,

coating a ~~strippable~~ peelable paint on a painted surface of the paint-finished automobile body ~~then~~

~~assembling the paint finished automobile by mounting an engine and functional parts thereto,~~

body to thereby form a protective film on the painted surface, and

at least the assembling step is carried out while the protective film of the strippable peelable paint remains coated on the painted surface of the paint-finished automobile body.

Claims 21-26 (Cancelled).

Claim 27 (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20, further including the steps of:

preliminarily drying said coated ~~strippable~~ peelable paint using a first drying means; and non-preliminarily drying the preliminarily dried, ~~strippable~~ peelable paint using a second drying means.

Claims 28-29 (Cancelled).

Claim 30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 27, wherein said step of preliminarily drying said ~~strippable~~ peelable paint uses infrared radiation from said first drying means and said step of non-preliminarily drying said ~~strippable~~ peelable paint uses hot air from said second drying means.

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Claim 31. (Currently amended) The method of claim 27, further including the step of stabilizing the ~~strippable~~ peelable paint after it is coated on said product and prior to said preliminary drying step.

Claim 32. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein said stabilizing step is performed at room temperature.

Claim 33. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein said preliminary and non-preliminary drying steps are performed at elevated temperatures.

Claims 34-35 (Cancelled).

Claim 36 (Withdrawn).

Claim 37. (Original) The method of claim 32, wherein said preliminary and non-preliminary drying steps are performed at elevated temperatures.

Claim 38. (Currently amended) The method of claim 20, wherein said ~~strippable~~ peelable paint is water based.

Claim 39. (Currently amended) The method of claim 27, wherein said ~~strippable~~ peelable paint is water based.

Claim 40. (Previously amended) The method of claim 31, wherein said stabilizing step is performed at an ambient temperature of 15-30 °C and an ambient humidity of 50-80% .

Claim 41. (Currently amended) The method of claim 27, wherein said preliminary drying step promotes drying of said coated ~~strippable~~ peelable paint from inside the coating, and said non-preliminary drying step dries the preliminarily dried, coated ~~strippable~~ peelable paint from outside the coating.

Claim 42. (Currently amended) The method of claim 30, wherein said preliminary drying step dries said coated ~~strippable~~ peelable paint from inside the coating, and said non-preliminary drying step dries the preliminarily dried, coated ~~strippable~~ peelable paint from outside the coating.

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Claim 43. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31, wherein said ~~strippable~~ peelable paint is water soluble and said stabilizing step is performed by allowing the automobile to stand for a sufficiently long time at an ambient temperature of 15-30 °C and an ambient humidity of 50-80% after application of the ~~strippable~~ peelable paint before said preliminary drying step.

44. (Currently amended) The method of claim 20, further comprising the steps of:  
partially drying the ~~strippable~~ peelable paint coated on the painted surface of the paint-finished automobile so as to promote drying of the ~~strippable~~ peelable paint from inside thereof;  
and

then finally drying the automobile to uniformly dry the entire ~~strippable~~ peelable paint coated on the painted surface of the paint-finished automobile.

45. (new) The method of claim 20, further including the step of shipping the manufactured vehicle after the inspecting step, wherein said inspecting and shipping steps are

carried out while the protective film of the peelable paint remains coated on the assembled automobile body.

46. (new) The method of claim 20, wherein said protective film formed in said peelable paint coating step has a sufficient thickness to protect said painted surface of the paint-finished automobile body against scratches during said assembling step.

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